



SENATOR RUNNER'S WEEK IN REVIEW

A WEEKLY REVIEW THAT WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED AND UP-TO-DATE



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California's Homeland Security

Three and a half years after September 11, 2001, California has not begun to comprehensively address the security issues posed by an internal community of illegal aliens believed to number somewhere between 8 and 10 million.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's recent praise of the Minuteman Project and border security, coupled with growing concerns at the top levels of government regarding the US-Mexican border, have revived a long running debate over the issue of border and port security.

A Porous Border

Under current conditions, terrorists can easily enter the United States undetected in the stream of illegal aliens crossing from Mexico annually. While Al Qaeda infiltration across the nation's southern border has been a constant concern since 9/11, U.S. officials cite recent intelligence giving the most definitive evidence yet that terrorists are planning to use it as an entry point. Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security and former USCG Commandant, Admiral James Loy, has testified that Al Qaeda plans to use Mexico's professional people smugglers to infiltrate terrorists across our southern border.

Federal border patrol lacks sufficient resources to adequately address and prohibit illegal immigration. A survey conducted by the Washington Times found that a shortage of detention space and staffing shortages force federal authorities to regularly release illegal aliens back to the streets of America and often to ignore requests to pick up illegal immigrants in the custody of state and local officials. The inability to pick up and detain individuals illegally entering the state presents a severe security risk and an onerous price tag to the citizens of California.

Analysis of the latest census data indicates that California's illegal immigrant population is costing the state's taxpayers more than \$10.5 billion per year for education, medical care, and incarceration. The annual fiscal burden from those three areas of state expenditures amounts to approximately \$1,183 per household.

Governor's Office of Homeland Security

News of the Week

[Governor Signs Law to Create Distinct Region for Antelope Valley](#)

[Runners Get Tough on Sex Offenders](#)

[Daily Bulletin Editorial: Charter Schools, Taxpayers Benefit from New Law](#)

[Internet Filters for Children at Los Angeles Public Libraries](#)

[Charter School Bill Protect Taxpayers](#)

[Column by Dan Walters: Finally A Down-Payment on Vocational Education](#)

[Column by Jill Stewart: The D's, the R's, and the Unions](#)

[Local Resident Tom Lacey to Serve as Representative for Senior Legislature](#)

The Governor's Office of Homeland Security (OHS) was established on February 7, 2003, by Executive Order D-67-03. The Office is responsible for coordinating homeland security activities throughout California. The office is currently charged with managing over \$300 million in federal grants, as well as coordinating homeland security policy for the state.

Despite budgetary issues and severe staffing shortages, the OHS has been making progress in efforts to secure California from terrorist attacks. Regional Terrorism Threat Assessment Centers have been established across the state. A State Terrorism Threat Assessment Center has been created in conjunction with the California Highway Patrol and the Department of Justice. Organizations from federal, state, and local levels have participated in statewide training exercises.

Grant Programs

California has been allocated approximately \$133 million for the FY 2005 U.S. Department of Homeland Security Grant Program. The grants are intended to provide funding for the prevention, deterrence, response to, and recovery from threats and incidents of terrorism. The Governor's OHS will administer five distinct Homeland Security Grant Programs. All five programs can be applied for through a single application package. California is required to sub-grant at least 80% of the funding to local units of government.

Finding a Solution

While the primary responsibility for combating illegal immigration and fighting terrorism rests with the federal government, California is crucial to the success or failure of the National Strategy for Homeland Security released by the President in July 2002. This strategy calls upon all Americans, all levels of government, and the private sector to unite in a national effort to combat terror.

During these economically challenging times, we must strike a balance between the promotion of economic prosperity through international trade and national security. As the federal government allocates funding for national security, our borders must remain a top priority.

The Legislature should act to authorize Office of Homeland Security in statute. Since OHS exists due to an Executive Order, the department does not have its own allocation in the budget, but instead is listed as a line item under OES. As such, OHS does not have direct control over its own budget. This lack of independence has hampered the ability of OHS to adequately meet the homeland security needs of California and has made the administration of vital programs unnecessarily complicated and inefficient.

Earlier this year, Senator Morrow introduced SB 693. This measure lays out a general authorization for the Adjutant General to develop, in conjunction with other government agencies, a border security plan for the citizens of California and the United States. The bill failed to garner the votes needed to pass from the Senate Veterans Committee.

Another proposal is the California Border Police Act which will be a state police force (like the CHP) established in the state constitution and under the authority of the Governor. The officers would be authorized to patrol the border and enforce all federal immigration laws statewide, including laws against employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants.

California also should consider adopting measures to systematically collect information on illegal alien use of taxpayer-funded services and on where they are employed. Policies could then be pursued to hold employers financially accountable.

If Admiral James Loy's warnings about al Qaeda are correct, California cannot afford to lose time gaining control over the illegal immigration pipeline into and inside our state.

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